

gramore that his use of "demonstrative evidence" — his once insisted that the jurors handle an artificial leg he brought into court — leads to a highly emotional assessment of damages.

### Doctors Consider Him an Archenemy

Doctors take an even dimmer view of Belli, ranking him second only to medicare as a threat to their peace of mind and financial security. Those he has cornered in the witness box loathe him for his cutting cross-examinations, and the profession as a whole damns him for almost doubling the cost of malpractice insurance.

Not in his own profession altogether happy with him. Elements in the American Bar Association, upset over his methods, have tried unsuccessfully to oust him, and only a week ago a leading Dallas lawyer rebuked him for his public comments on the Ruby case.

If this sort of criticism bothers him, Belli doesn't show it. If anything, he seems to relish a scolding, since it gives him an opportunity to reply with his specialty, the finely-honed retort.

On insurance firms: "They could speedily put all personal injury lawyers out of business if they would simply make reasonable and prompt payments on all damage claims."

On doctors: "Some doctors I've examined on the stand should be sent back to medical school. Generally, they seem to present that part of their anatomy to me that makes it easy for me to twist their tails."

On lawyers: "Too many of them are ledger-jockeys for tax-dodging corporations... dull, dry and gutless... with no concern for the little guy."

AS BELLI tells it, he determined on being a lawyer back in 1912, just five years after he was born in the old gold rush town of Sonora, Calif., the son of a banker named Caesar Belli.

"That's right," he said, "I inclined to the law when I was just 5 years old. Got the yen from looking at the Book of Knowledge... looking at pictures of the moon, things like that."

He breezed through the University of California and its School of Law and hung out his shingle in San Francisco, which is still home base for his coast-to-coast practice.

In negligence cases, Belli (pronounced it Bell-eye) knows his way around in criminal court. He spent his legal internship handling stratagems dreamed up by convicts hopeful of springing themselves from San Quentin. He also has defended quite a roster of accused killers against big league prosecutors—Chief Justice Warren of the U.S. Supreme Court among them.

"Earl Warren was the district attorney in my first big case," Belli recalls, "that of a man charged with buying strychnine to poison his wife. Warren was dead-bang wrong on the case. He's not a good lawyer, but he's a good justice, a good administrative judge."

Today, Belli, with a couple of partners, operates out of a plush, rococo suite of offices on San Francisco's Montgomery St., in the heart of the nightclub district and only a bar's length away from the city's historically sinful Barbary Coast.

### Offices Carpeted, Draped in Scarlet

The offices are carpeted and draped in scarlet, in the tradition of the elegant bawdy houses of a bygone San Francisco era. The suite is cluttered with an assortment of antiques that range from a 1910-model Copenhagen telephone to an array of rural mailboxes lining a corridor.

Each morning, Belli seats himself behind a massive desk that faces a picture window. There he works, in full view of passers-by who often stop and press their noses to the glass. Occasionally, he'll stand at his long, mahogany office bar, a relic of the mining camps, and exchange grave nods with the audience.

The show is over promptly at

12:30. In Belli makes his way down a narrow spiral staircase to the basement. There, in solitary concentration, he prepares his cases with a thoroughness that has come as a jolting surprise to many a lawyer who figured the Belli image was mostly dazzle.

It's an easy mistake to make; in court or out, he is as conspicuous as a large diamond in a coal bin.

AT 56, Belli is a florid, largish, distinguished-actor type who wears his graying hair in the sort of swept-back mane affected by U. S. senators around the turn of the century.

Sartorially, he is a picture of eccentric splendor: glove-soft, high-heeled boots made in Italy, elegant custom-made shirts and costly suits with double-breasted jackets. When he throws back his jacket in his frequent thumbs-in-vest stance, he gives jurors a glimpse of blinding scarlet lining.

In court, he is a master showman. One of his favorite techniques is to fumble interminably in his briefcase for an incriminating document — previously referred to with an air of great mystery — while the witness squirms miserably on the stand.

### Expert at Use Of Visual Aids

He is also expert at subtly but respectfully aggravating a judge into losing his temper. Belli uses this tactic sometimes when he knows the case will be appealed. The judge's outburst will tend to make him appear somewhat less than impartial to the appellate judges who read the record.

But Belli is not a showman for his artful use of demonstrative evidence. He pioneered the use of blackboard and chalk to drive home his points, and his use of visual aids in evidence has won many a juror poycey.

Once, while arguing a malpractice suit based on a Caesarian operation, Belli brought a custom-made mannequin which, when undressed, displayed all the vital organs of a woman. The various parts, including the uterus, were detached as necessary by Belli and handed around to the astonished jurors. They awarded his client \$52,000.

In another malpractice suit, Belli went even farther. This was the case of a woman who had undergone abdominal surgery and had been left with scars. Belli intended to show them to the jury through photographs. The defendant doctor refused to accept the photographic evidence.

So, as Belli puts it, "the plaintiff was taken into the courtroom and disrobed in front of the jury."

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the plaintiff completely disrobed, her head down. Tears welled in her eyes, and dropped onto her breasts. The jury gave her \$115,000 for her scar tissue.

There is nothing Belli likes better, legally speaking, than a malpractice case. He has a low boiling point for doctors, whom he charges with stuffiness, exclusiveness, and unjustifiable reluctance to testify against other doctors accused of malpractice. "Should there be one justice for doctors and another for the rest



Though they're happy here, Belli and second wife, photographer Toni Nichols, shortly called it quits.

of the U.S.?" he asks. "It's up to the courageous doctors and lawyers to insist that doctors rejoin the human, law-abiding human race."

If his courtroom technique is theatrical, Belli insists there is ample justification for it. To explain, he cites the case in which he brought in an artificial leg, wrapped in butcher's paper, slowly unwrapped it and handed it over to the shocked jurors.

"The point was to show the jury what it means to wear an artificial leg," Belli said. The jury got the point, awarding \$100,000 to the young woman who had to wear the leg.

Most often, it is Belli's opponents who complain of such stage business in the courtroom. He has some highly respected defenders, including Dean Roscoe Pound of the Harvard Law School, who calls Belli "a master of this mode of presenting cases." "If I'm flamboyant," says Belli, "I can afford to be."

**B**UT under his flamboyance is a solid body of legal knowledge. His dozens of published books include such professional volumes as "Trial and Tort Trends," "Life and Law in Russia," and "Life and Law in Japan."

"The More Adequate Award," and "Medical Malpractice." For the popular trade, he has written a \$2.25 paperback in which he good-naturedly defends his razzle-dazzle technique against charges of "ambulance chasing."

He has also invaded the record field in a three-disk album, "The Voice of Modern Trials," in which he recreates his arguments in some of his more spectacular cases. One is his plea in behalf of Maurcen (Little Mo) Connolly, one-time tennis star, who was injured when a truck frightened the horse she was riding. Belli collected \$95,000 for her.

Though he is not a man to cringe from publicity, Belli did draw the line a few years ago at a book about him, "Life and Limb," by Robert Wallace. He tried unsuccessfully to keep it off the stands.

He seemed to object chiefly to Wallace's reports that he suggested an X-ray of his head as the frontispiece to his three-volume work, "Modern Trials," and at one time celebrated a big jury award by wearing a necktie that lighted up.

Belli also turned down a Hollywood producer who wanted to make a movie based on the book. "I'm damned if I will," he said. But he added, after a bit of thought: "I might be interested—if they'd let me play the part of a crooked insurance adjuster."

#### Yearly Seminar Always Crowded

Mostly, he confines his non-courtroom appearances to a yearly seminar, always crowded with lawyers eager to learn from the master. It features films, lectures and demonstrations, all staged with brilliant Belli showmanship.

A couple of years ago, he introduced a surprise guest: Patti White, 25 (37-24-36), a strip-teasing former schoolteacher whose seminar theme was, "What Legal Education Really Needs." To illustrate her thesis, Patti doffed her cap and gown, slipped out of her slip, and told her attentive audience:

"From this point on there is no reasonable doubt."

Belli's fun-and-games approach to life, plus his long absences at faraway trials, has brought him his share of marital turbulence; appropriately for a goer, his third and current wife is a former airline hostess.

His first wife divorced him in 1951 after 16 years of marriage, mainly because she wanted some continuity in her home life. She accepted a \$30,000 home in suburban San Francisco and \$62,000 in oil holdings as a settlement.

They have four children—

Richard, 27, an accountant who has decided to enter law school; Melvin Jr., 24, who has entered a Trappist monastery in California; Jean, 21, who is a student nurse, and Susie, 18, who wants to become a teacher.

Belli's second wife was a Life magazine photographer, Toni Nichols. Once, in the course of their short and stormy marriage, Belli showed up at a law convention in Chicago with a scratched face.

He explained that he had had a row with his wife. "Here I am, lecturing to the convention on pain and suffering in a seminar on torts, and I'm exhibit A," he said.

#### She Quit Airline Job To Become Mrs. Belli

In 1955, a friend introduced Belli to Joy Gurney, who quit her airline job to become the third Mrs. Belli. They spent their honeymoon in Yuma, Ariz., where he was trying a case.

The Bellis live most of the time in an elegant, early-California style home (it might be that Belli looks upon himself as a throwback to that gaudy, free-wheeling era), on fashionable Telegraph Hill, and some of the time in an Italianate villa they own in the Hollywood Hills. Their life revolves around their 6-year-old son, Caesar Melvin Belli.

Belli totes on little Caesar so much so that he not only turned over title of his Belli Borden to the boy, but insists on presenting all prospective tenants to him; if Caesar doesn't approve the applicants, they don't get in, thus making the lad the only 6-year-old landlord around.

A desire to leave a page in history for his son's sake probably was a contributory factor in Belli's decision to defend Jack Ruby.

He has all the money he'll ever need. His reputation, though limited, is secure. But his friends feel that Belli has been waiting all his life for the one big case that would elevate him to the stature of Clarence Darrow, this country's most famous lawyer of modern times.

Such a case would, of course, have to be historic, highly dramatic and, from the point of view of the defense, a battle against almost insuperable odds.

The incredible series of events in the Kennedy-Oswald Ruby tragedy will occupy the attention of historians for generations; sheer drama it at least is. The assassination of 1963, a century ago, and the old Jack Ruby, the only killer in the annals of murder who took a job with 50 million people looking at him are tremendous.

To a lawyer with McGovern's sense of history, flair for the dramatic and instant hostility to the underdog—whether it be insurance company, the medical profession or the state—the Ruby case was irresistible. And there's all that publicity, too.

(Photos by Ken Melino)

## Aspects of a Million-Dollar-a-Year Man

Primarily a negligence lawyer, Belli estimates he wins \$1 million a year for his clients, lives lavishly on one-third (no fee if he loses) he takes for services. Left, he relaxes at home with third wife, former airline hostess Joy Gurney, and son, Caesar, 6. Right, Belli strikes pose against bar in office where he dispenses hospitality along with counsel.



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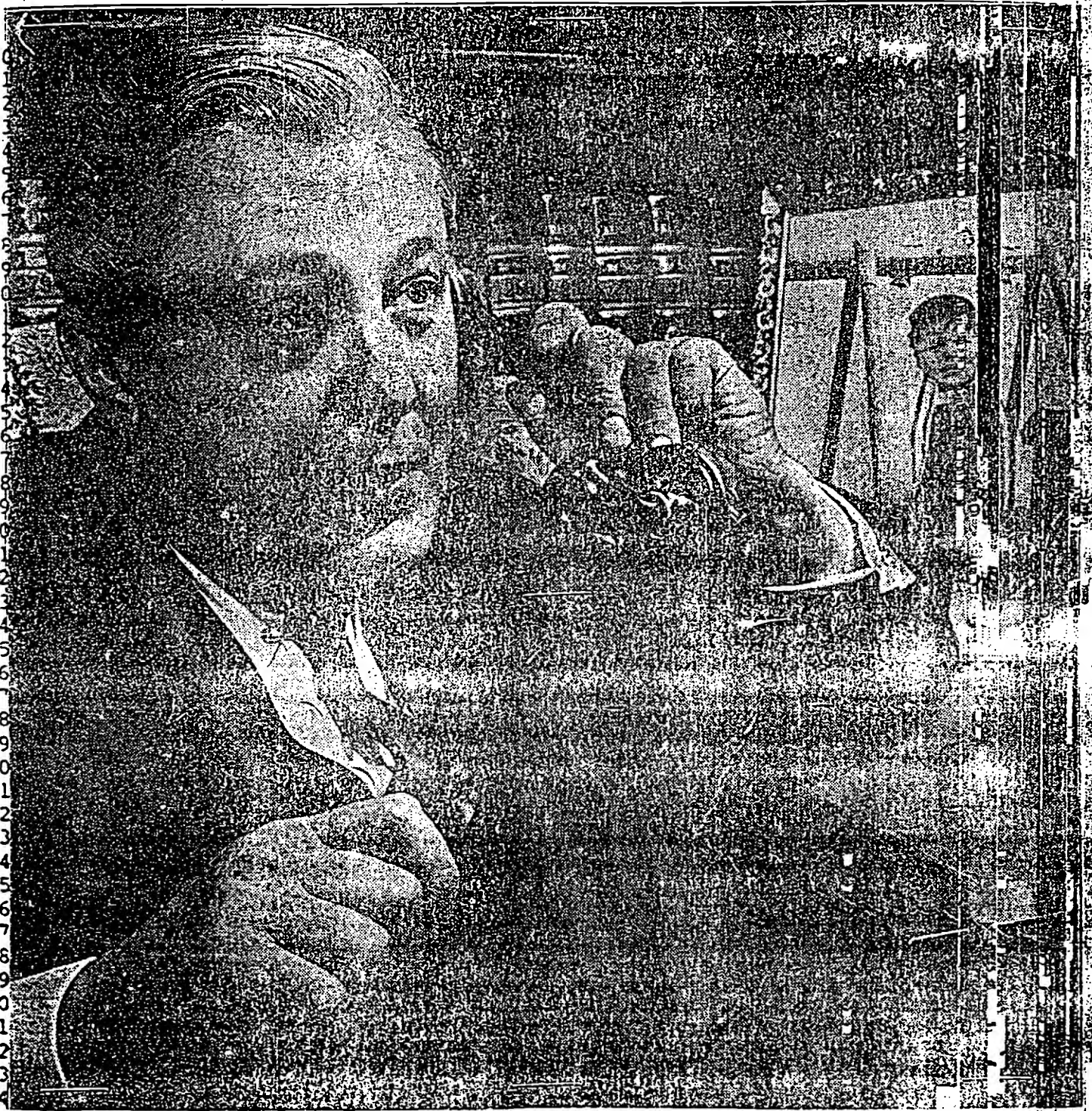
In one of most dramatic photos of all time, Ruby is shown at instant he shot Lee Oswald in basement of Dallas jail.

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## A black and white portrait photograph of a man with short, dark hair, wearing a dark suit jacket, a light-colored shirt, and a dark tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a light, textured gray. The image has a grainy, high-contrast quality typical of older newspaper prints.

# The Defender

An old hand at battling odds, Melvin Belli [←] is picture of confidence as he discusses defense of client Jack Ruby [A], killer of late President Kennedy's presumed assassin, in rococo San Francisco office where 1890ish decor includes antique phone.



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 Tele. Room \_\_\_\_\_  
 Holmes \_\_\_\_\_  
 Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

## Belli Rips Dallas, Bar Group

# A Defense Lawyer's Own Defense

Special to the Herald Tribune

SAN FRANCISCO

Melvin Belli thought up fresh, unpleasant phrases for Dallas yesterday, and also took on the American Bar Association.

The defense in the Jack Ruby murder trial, which he headed until fired Thursday by the Ruby family, was "assassinated" by Dallas, he said. "If the trial had been televised, all the lawyers in the United States would have marched on Dallas."

And as for the American Bar Association, whose president, Walter C. Craig, criticized Mr. Belli's courtroom outburst after the guilty verdict last Saturday:

"I cannot continue in the American Bar Association if I am to continue to believe in justice and due process."

"Let him (Mr. Craig) investigate the substance of the charges made and not the man who made the charges."

In Dallas, the new Ruby defense team took the first formal step to appeal the death sentence.

Here, in a crowded press conference Mr. Belli predicted a successful appeal, said his fee for directing the case had been "zero" and renewed his denunciation of Dallas.

Throughout the case, he had persisted, that Dallas, shocked by the assassination of President Kennedy and the murder two days later of his accused assassin, could not give Ruby a fair trial.

When the all-white, all-Protestant jury handed in its

verdict Saturday, he blew up and denounced the verdict. "I welled up in me," he explained yesterday, when he saw the jurors, "self-satisfied and smug."

What happened in Dallas, he said, "lies with the system. An oligarchy is in charge which says what you shall do or not do."

About his firing by the Ruby family, Mr. Belli was silent. "As far as I'm concerned, Jack is my friend," he said. "He's got a case and he's going to win it."

The new trial motion, filed in Dallas by lawyer Phil Burleson listed the best-known criminal lawyer in Texas, Percy Foreman, as the new member of the defense team. Mr. Burleson and Joe Tonahill continued as Ruby's representatives.

The motion was filed with the clerk of trial Judge J. B. Brown's court and cited 36 alleged errors as grounds for a new trial. It will no doubt be denied and the case taken to the state Court of Criminal Appeals.

The Washington Post \_\_\_\_\_  
 Times Herald \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Washington Daily News \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Evening Star \_\_\_\_\_  
 New York Herald Tribune \_\_\_\_\_  
 New York Journal-American \_\_\_\_\_  
 New York Mirror \_\_\_\_\_  
 New York Daily News \_\_\_\_\_  
 New York Post \_\_\_\_\_  
 The New York Times \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Worker \_\_\_\_\_  
 The New Leader \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Wall Street Journal \_\_\_\_\_  
 The National Observer \_\_\_\_\_  
 People's World \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_

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 DATE 6-12-80 BY SP2TAP/Jan

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Belli Resigns From ABA; Ruby Asks for New Trial

By CARL FREUND

Melvin Belli fired a new verbal salvo at Dallas Friday and resigned under fire from the American Bar Association.

Meanwhile, Jack Ruby's reshuffled legal staff took the first step in its fight to win a new trial for the condemned slayer. The fight may last three years and reach the U.S. Supreme Court.

Belli announced he was quitting the ABA, which is composed of lawyers throughout the nation, less than 48 hours after he was fired as chief defense attorney in the Ruby case.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT came during a press conference in Belli's picturesque San Francisco office.

Belli indicated he would take no further action in the Ruby case.

"I'm sending in a withdrawal (from the case) at the request of the family," he said.

Walter C. Craig of Phoenix, Ariz., who heads the ABA, rebuked Belli during a San Francisco speech Wednesday. Demands mounted for an investigation to determine whether Belli's conduct, including his tirades after Ruby was convicted, violated the ABA code of ethics.

REPORTERS ASKED Belli during his press conference to comment on his dismissal as

a member of the defense staff. Belli refused, saying, "That would be unfair to a sick man under the shadow of the electric chair."

But he had plenty to say about Dallas.

He said Dallas is ruled by an oligarchy "which says what you shall do or not do."

And, he said, "All the lawyers in the United States would have marched on Dallas if Ruby's trial had been televised."

ATTORNEY PHIL Burleson opened the legal battle to set aside Ruby's death penalty by filing a motion for a new trial.

It listed 35 reasons why defense lawyers contend Ruby failed to get a fair trial when a jury of eight men and four women convicted him of the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald.

The motion was signed by Burleson and Joe Tonahill, a Jasper lawyer.

BOTH WERE associated with

(Indicate page, name newspaper, city and e.)

1 "The Dallas Morning News"  
Dallas, Texas

Date: 3-21-64  
Edition:  
Author:  
Editor:  
Title: Jack B. Krueger  
Character:  
or  
Classification:  
Submitting Office: I 1195

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Belli during Ruby's month-long trial.

Burleson said he conferred by phone with Percy Foreman, the 6-foot-4, 250-pound Houston lawyer hired Thursday to head the defense, and Foreman authorized him to file the plea.

The defense lawyers said Judge Jue B. Brown blocked Ruby from receiving a fair trial by

—Refusing to move the trial  
to another county.

—LETTING JURORS pass judgment on Ruby even though they had "witnessed" the slaying on their television screens.

—Allowing officers to testify about statements they said Ruby made while under arrest.

—Denying a pretrial sanity hearing.

Judge Brown, who was reported out of the city Friday, will schedule a hearing, probably late next month.

If Judge Brown denies the request for a new trial, defense lawyers will go to the Court of Criminal Appeals. If turned down there, they could ask the federal courts to review the case on the ground Ruby's constitutional rights have been violated.

**BELLI SAID** he feels he had right to speak out against the "Dallas situation." He said he doesn't want to belong to the ABA if membership in the organization would require him to "sit back and tolerate this situation."

Belli praised Dallas residents as individuals, terming them "fine people."

But when they become jurors, he said, "something sick happens" and they feel they must convict to protect the city's image. He said the ABA should investigate the "Dallas system" instead of castigating him.

Belli told San Francisco reporters that, after the Ruby jury had deliberated two hours, The Dallas News headlined this fact.

"THEY'RE NOT used to such deliberation," Belli said. "They're used to 2-minute justice."

(The Dallas News did not publish such a headline.)

Belli also termed Wade "a master of snide remarks" and accused the prosecutor of unfair tactics.

After Ruby received the death penalty, Belli said he would quit practicing law if his client died in the electric chair. But Belli said Friday, "I won't be scared away (from trying cases) by insurance attorneys, by district attorneys or by the president of the ABA."

Foreman will arrive here Sunday to confer with Ruby in the county jail.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

TO : Mr. W. C. Sullivan

FROM : D. J. Brennan, Jr.

SUBJECT: MELVIN MOURON BELLI  
INFORMATION CONCERNING

DATE: 3/23/64

Tolson ☒  
Belmont ☒  
Mohr ☒  
Casper ☒  
Callahan ☒  
Conrad ☒  
DeLoach ☒  
Evans ☒  
Gale ☒  
Rosen ☒  
Sullivan ☒  
Tavel ☒  
Trotter ☒  
Tele. Room ☒  
Holmes ☒  
Gandy ☒

Melvin Mouron Belli is the San Francisco, California attorney who defended Jack Ruby, the accused slayer of Lee Harvey Oswald in Dallas, Texas. Ruby was found guilty on 3/14/64. Following the verdict, Belli made a vicious verbal attack against the court, the judge, and the City of Dallas.

On 3/20/64, [REDACTED] Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, advised that a review of the Passport file on Belli at State revealed a rather interesting item. By letter dated October 2, 1962, to the Passport Office, John F. Shelly, Congressman from the Fifth District of California, indicated that Belli desired to visit Cuba in early December, 1962, to observe the judicial structure of Cuba under Castro. This letter indicated that Belli recently visited Albania to obtain material to write law review articles. Mr. Scott said that this date is important because on October 14, 1962, the U.S. obtained photographs of the missile build up on Cuba which resulted in the October, 1962, Cuban crisis. By letter dated November 5, 1962, Belli wrote the Passport Office and said that he desired to visit Cuba in December, 1962. State granted permission on November 15, 1962, for Belli to travel to Cuba stating the approval would not extend beyond January 30, 1963. By letter dated January 14, 1963, Belli again wrote to State and requested extension of his permit to go to Cuba and requested permission to go to Albania. He indicated that he was gathering material for law review articles. By letter dated January 28, 1963, State approved Belli's going to Cuba for a period not to exceed June 30, 1963, and approved his going to Albania not to exceed July 30, 1963.

Mr. Scott advised that Passport files do not show whether Belli made either trip. He indicated that he thought it unusual for Belli to go to Cuba during the explosive period involving the missile build up in Cuba. Mr. Scott further advised that State Department files do not show that Belli has submitted any law review articles during the past couple of years and further that their file on law review articles is rather extensive and complete.

1-Mr. Belmont 1-Mr. Branigan  
1-Mr. Sullivan 1-Liaison  
1-Mr. Rosen 1-Mr. Bartlett

OHB:mer (7)

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**ACTION:**

For information. Belli has been dismissed by Ruby as his attorney to handle his appeals.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

1 - Mr. Belmont  
1 - Mr. Mohr  
1 - Mr. DeLoach  
1 - Mr. Rosen  
1 - Mr. Sullivan  
1 - Mr. Malley

TO : W. C. Sullivan

DATE: 4-8-64

1 - Mr. Branigan  
1 - Mr. Lenihan  
1 - Mr. Rose

FROM : W. A. Branigan

SUBJECT: LEE HARVEY OSWALD  
INTERNAL SECURITY - RUSSIA - CUBA

Reference is made to my memorandum dated 2-28-64 above-captioned, regarding information received from [redacted] and [redacted] respectively and [redacted] Publications, that a reporter had been advised by Melv Belli, former attorney for Jack Ruby, that Oswald and Ruby had been FBI informants. Smith indicated this reporter had a tape recording of Belli making this allegation.

Belli has been thoroughly questioned regarding the above allegation and in connection therewith has been specifically advised Ruby and Oswald were never FBI informants. Belli advised he never stated Ruby and/or Oswald were FBI informants. He explained that he had heard unfounded rumors inferring that Oswald might have been an FBI informant but that he had placed no credence in these rumors.

Mr. Belli was of the opinion that these rumors originated with William Alexander, Assistant District Attorney, Dallas, Texas, and that he was getting "damned tired" of Alexander planting such rumors.

Referenced memorandum also pointed out that while Belli had categorically denied making the statements alleged by [redacted] officials, the Bureau should pin this matter down by requesting [redacted] to make [redacted] Belli's statements available. Assistant Director DeLoach contacted [redacted] and requested that [redacted] Belli's statements be made available. [redacted] indicated that [redacted] the Bureau. While Mr. DeLoach has followed with [redacted] and the latter has said [redacted] we have [redacted] there is no indication we will. It may be [redacted] It is believed this matter should be pinned down and that Mr. DeLoach should have [redacted] either produce [redacted] specifically why he cannot.

105-82555

BFR:klw/mhw (10)

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DATE 6-19-80 BY SP2 TMS/CAW

SOVIET SPIONAGE



Memo Branigan to Sullivan  
re: LEE HARVEY OSWALD  
IS - R - CUBA  
105-82555

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. While my memorandum of 3-4-64 recommended that the President's Commission be advised of this false allegation after we [redacted] it is to be noted we have not [redacted] and, therefore, Belli may be right in that he never made such a statement. If this is correct, we are already on record with the Commission that Oswald was never an informant, and no useful purpose would be served in advising the Commission of the allegation or Belli's denial at this time.

2. That Mr. DeLoach follow with [redacted] to either obtain [redacted] or determine why [redacted] cannot [redacted]

Belmont \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mohr \_\_\_\_\_  
 Casper \_\_\_\_\_  
 Callahan \_\_\_\_\_  
 Conrad \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Tavel \_\_\_\_\_  
 Trotter \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tele. Room \_\_\_\_\_  
 Holmes \_\_\_\_\_  
 Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

Bel Won't

**Go Quietly**

SAN FRANCISCO, April 28 (UPI)—Controversial San Francisco attorney Melvin Belli has changed his mind today about plans to resign from the American Bar Association.

He sent a 26-page letter to ABA president Walter E. Craig of Phoenix, Ariz., yesterday, saying "I'll be damned if I'll resign quietly. I'm going to let you try and kick me out publicly."

Mr. Belli defended Jack Ruby, accused slayer of Lee Harvey Oswald.

The Washington Post and Times Herald \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Washington Daily News \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Evening Star \_\_\_\_\_  
 New York Herald Tribune \_\_\_\_\_  
 New York Journal-American \_\_\_\_\_  
 New York Mirror \_\_\_\_\_  
 New York Daily News \_\_\_\_\_  
 New York Post \_\_\_\_\_  
 The New York Times \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Worker \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Law Leader \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Wall Street Journal \_\_\_\_\_  
 The National Observer \_\_\_\_\_  
 People's World \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_

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*File  
 6-11-64*

56 MAY 7 1964

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 DATE 6-18-80 BY SP2TAR/gm

# Belli Fears Death Waits at His 'Trial' in Dallas

On the Line—By Bob Considine



CONSIDINE

MELVIN BELLI the San Francisco legal beagle whose screams immediately after the Jack Ruby jury handed down its instant-electric chair verdict offended the American Bar Association, is scheduled to go on trial himself in Dallas June 15.

A grievance committee of the ABA wants him to show cause why he should not be dumped by the association for violation of Canons 1, 20 and 27 of the Canons of Professional Ethics. In effect, Belli yelled, "We wuz robbed!" Many of those present, including this reporter, agreed.

Belli spent long hours in court during the trial demanding a change of venue for Ruby on the ground that Ruby couldn't get a fair trial in Dallas; that death was his biggest prospect there. Now he is demanding a change of venue for himself and generally for the same reasons.

"You have arbitrarily set the place, of all places, for this 'trial' as Dallas, Texas!" Belli, an accomplished user of the exclamation point, writes in his stinging reply to the summons issued by O. E. McEwan, chairman of the ABA's gripes department. "I advise you, girl, that I had numerous letters, some of which have

already been turned over to the FBI, threatening me with bodily violence and death if I return to Dallas. I think you must be aware of this . . . When you chose Dallas as the site of my 'trial'.

Just recently, Federal U.S. District Judge Sarah Hughes, who administered the oath of office to President Johnson, said that Dallas was a city of hate, the only city in the United States in which the assassination of the President could have been possible.

"Warren Leslie, in his recently published 'Dallas City Limits,' and other writers have characterized Dallas as a city of murder and the 'murder capital' of the world."

"I do not want to add myself as a statistic to this macabre batting average, even at your whim! There are a number of things I would like to say of and about the American Bar Association and in my defense at this 'trial' I would like to remain alive to say them. Consequently, I ask that the 'trial' be held at the headquarters of the ABA, Chicago, and not in Dallas."

Belli had something bristling to say, too, about the fact that the panel that will try him is made up entirely of Southern lawyers. We'd print excerpts, but

Reamont  
Mahan  
Casper  
Callahan  
Conrad  
DeLoach  
Evans  
Gale  
Rosen  
Sullivan  
Tavel  
Trotter  
Tele. Room  
Holmes  
Gandy

The Washington Post and Times Herald  
The Washington Daily News  
The Evening Star  
New York Herald Tribune  
New York Journal-American  
New York Mirror  
New York Daily News  
New York Post  
The New York Times  
The Worker  
The New Leader  
The Wall Street Journal  
The National Observer  
People's World  
Date

NOT RECORDED  
46 JUN 9 1964

MAY 31

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HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 6-19-70 BY SP2 RPL/CM

74 JUN 11 1964

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this dear old newspaper has just run out of asbestos.

\* \* \*

WELL, BY NOW there is overwhelming agreement that Gen. Eisenhower's statement about the kind of man the GOP needs was, indeed, an arrow in Sen. Barry Goldwater's back. On the eve of the great contest in California, Gov. Nelson Rockefeller is making sounds like a winner. The polls show that Barry has been pole-axed.

But here's a thought that I haven't seen expressed. Suppose Goldwater wins? Suppose the people who were shouting for him a few weeks ago close ranks, round up multitudes of independents, and give him all 86 delegates?

If that happens, Ike and his Eastern advisors, headed by Tom Dewey, Gen. Lucius Clay and his brother Milton, will have blown most if not all of their influence at the convention.

Stranger tides have run in the muddy waters of politics.

\* \* \*

INDIA'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE, without Nehru, will bear watching. He dominated its government to a greater degree, in some respects, than Khrushchev rules the Soviet Union. He never delegated very much authority, insisted on giving personal attention to matters as trivial as the length of the speeches his ministers made and their position in reception lines when foreign dignitaries would come calling.

If there is a vacuum in our political setup at present, what with no Vice President, there was a colossal void in India's. Gandhi shaped Nehru; Nehru shaped only himself—and was imminently pleased with what he had wrought. He must have considered himself indestructible, and the Hearst Task-Force was inclined to agree.

When we called at his residence in New Delhi one evening in December of 1962, the 72-year-old leader came bouncing down the grand stairway with the vitality of a youngster. He was immaculate in his white leggings, three-quarter length jacket and spotless white dcap. The customary rosebud peeked from the jacket's fold.

He had spent hours at the front, earlier that day, a front that was 13,000 feet high in the foothills of the Himalayas.

Who could sub for him now, if that front blazed again?

Hearst Headline Service

Read Bob Considine's column Monday through Friday in The Journal-American!



FBI

Date: 7/14/64

Transmit the following in \_\_\_\_\_  
(Type in plain text or code)

AIRTEL

AIR MAIL

(Priority or Method of Mailing)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-24016)  
FROM: SAC, DALLAS (44-1639) (P)  
RE: JACK L. RUBY, aka.;  
LEE HARVEY OSWALD, aka. (Deceased) - VICTIM  
CR

The attached copy of a letter dated April 21, 1964, from MELVIN BELLI, former RUBY defense counsel, to WALTER E. CRAIG, President, the American Bar Association, came into possession of this office on July 2, 1964, from a PCI, unsolicited.

The letter was apparently occasioned by items which appeared in the press sometime after conclusion of the RUBY trial to the effect Mr. CRAIG had announced a hearing of the American Bar Association would be held to consider the unethical and intemperate behavior of BELLI at the conclusion of the trial and upon hearing the verdict.

FBI is mentioned on pages 17, paragraph one, and 22, paragraph 2.

In the event the Bureau desires to furnish a copy to the President's Commission, it is requested same be reproduced at Bureau as no copy is being retained by Dallas.

ENCLOSURE

Enc. (1)

MCC/ds

(5)

105-49865-

NOT RECORDED

170 JUL 23 1964

Approved

Special Agent in Charge

DATE 6-12-80 BY SP2RMP/Edm

July 23, 1964

BY COURIER SERVICE

- 1 - Mr. Belmont
- 1 - Mr. Rosen
- 1 - Mr. Malley
- 1 - Mr. McGowan
- 1 - Mr. Hirs

105-49865-  
Honorable J. Lee Rankin  
General Counsel  
The President's Commission  
200 Maryland Avenue, Northeast  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Rankin:

Enclosed herewith is a copy of a letter dated April 21, 1964, from Malvin Belli, former Baby defense counsel, to Walter E. Craig, President of the American Bar Association. This letter came into possession of this Bureau through a confidential source and it is noted that you received this first prior to any action by the Internal Security Branch thereof.

It is being forwarded for your information inasmuch as it contains data relating to Jack L. Ruby and his trial in Dallas, Texas.

With reference to the statement made by Mr. Belli on page 17 of the letter to the effect that Sergeant Dean of the Dallas Police Department recently complained to his chief of police that the FBI had accused him of lying, I wish to advise you that this statement is completely false. No Agent or representative of this Bureau has accused Sergeant Dean of lying nor have they at any time discussed with Sergeant Dean his testimony given at the trial of Jack L. Ruby.

Sincerely yours,

J. Edgar Hoover

JWH/ras  
(7)

SEE NOTE ON PAGE TWO.

Enclosure

4 JUL 27 1964

Room  
TELETYPE UNIT

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NOTE:

Dallas obtained from a confidential source a copy of a letter directed by Belli to Walter E. Craig, President of the ABA in which he states that he will not resign from the ABA and tells Craig that he will have to be kicked out publicly. He goes into a lengthy and typically Belli discussion of the public charges made by Craig against him concerning his handling of Ruby's defense and attempts to justify and defend his position against these charges. He states on page 17 that Sgt. Dean was allowed to testify to conversation by Jack Ruby a half hour after Ruby's arrest (these statements indicated premeditation on Ruby's part). He said that Dean complained to the Chief of Police that the FBI had accused him of lying. This refers to the incident wherein Dean was interviewed by Mr. Burt Griffin of the President's Commission after the trial of Ruby, after which Dean complained to Chief Curry that Griffin had accused him of lying in his testimony at the trial. Chief Curry complained to Mr. Rankin who recalled Griffin from Dallas. His only other reference to the FBI is on page 22 where he speaks of the many rumors concerning the assassination and Ruby which he felt hurt his case as they made it appear that the law enforcement agencies, local, national and the FBI, could not or would not report the "plot" in all its intendments.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# Memorandum

TO : Mr. Belmont

DATE: July 30, 1964

FROM : A. Rosen

SUBJECT: JACK L. RUBY, AKA;  
LEE HARVEY OSWALD, AKA - VICTIM  
CIVIL RIGHTS

- 1 - Mr. Mohr
- 1 - Mr. DeLoach
- 1 - Mr. Belmont
- 1 - Mr. Rosen
- 1 - Mr. Malley
- 1 - Mr. McGowan
- 1 - Mr. Hines
- 1 - Mr. Edwards

Mr. Tolson  
Mr. DeLoach  
Mr. Mohr  
Mr. Bishop  
Mr. Casper  
Mr. Callahan  
Mr. Conrad  
Mr. Felt  
Mr. Gale  
Mr. Rosen  
Mr. Sullivan  
Mr. Tavel  
Mr. Trotter  
Tele. Room  
Mr. Holmes  
Miss Gandy

[REDACTED] confidentially advised that he had recently had occasion to become acquainted with Shields Mitchell, a free lance cameraman and producer of motion pictures in Dallas, Texas. Mitchell told [REDACTED] that he had been employed by Melvin Belli, former legal counsel for Ruby, during the pretrial interviews that Belli had with Ruby.

Mitchell said that Belli had demanded and received as his fee for defending Ruby complete rights to any book or film based on Ruby's life and Belli had employed Mitchell and another cameraman to shoot considerable film footage of Ruby during Belli's interview with him. Mitchell said Belli explained the use of the cameramen, if challenged, by stating that it was necessary for him to completely ascertain the personality and character of Ruby for his assistance in preparing Ruby's defense. In reality according to Mitchell, Belli was compiling an immense film library on Ruby for future exploitation and apparently hoped that Ruby would "crack up" during one of the interviews so that it could be recorded on film. Belli's belief was that such film would become priceless as a historic document in the future and that he would personally reap rich rewards.

Mitchell stated that Belli frequently referred to unethical approach he was using, stating that if it became known he would "go to jail." These references to illegality caused Mitchell to disassociate himself from Belli's employment and he was sworn to secrecy by Belli before leaving his employ.

Dallas has advised that they would make no effort to interview Shields Mitchell concerning this matter and suggested that the Bureau consider furnishing the information to Walter P. Craig, President, American Bar Association (ABA), in view of the report of a multi-million dollar suit filed by Belli against Craig and the ABA. In view of the interest of the President's Commission in Jack Ruby, it will be necessary to advise them of the information reported by [REDACTED]

705-49-65

NOT RECORDED

170 AUG 11 1964

JWH/ras

(8)

79 AUG 13 1964 SENT DIRECTOR

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 6-12-80 BY SP-10 JSC



Memorandum to Mr. Belmont  
RE: JACK L. RUBY, AKA;

The dispute between Belli and Craig and the ABA has received considerable publicity which was instigated primarily by both Belli and Craig. If the information furnished by [REDACTED] on a confidential basis is given to Craig, it will no doubt also become a part of the news media. The Bureau must not become involved in this public argument between Belli and Craig. b7C b7D

ACTION:

In view of the Commission's interest in Ruby, the information furnished by [REDACTED] will be disseminated to the President's Commission taking care to conceal [REDACTED] as the source. b7C b7D

Dallas will be instructed to conduct no investigation concerning this matter and they will be advised that the information will be disseminated to the President's Commission only and is not to be furnished to Craig or anyone else outside of the Bureau.

A copy of this memorandum has been furnished to Mr. Edwards who handles liaison with the ABA for his information only.

*[Handwritten signatures and initials are visible in the lower half of the page, including "J. Edgar Hoover" and "W. C. Sullivan"]*

FBI

Date: 8/1/64

Transmit the following in \_\_\_\_\_  
(Type in plain text or code)

AIRTEL

(Priority)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-24016)  
FROM: SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (44-430) (P)  
SUBJECT: JACK L. RUBY, Aka;  
LEE HARVEY OSWALD, Aka - VICTIM  
CIVIL RIGHTS  
OO: Dallas

Re: SHIELDS MITCHELL

Re Oklahoma City airtel to Director, 7/23/64;  
Bureau airtel to Oklahoma City 7/30/64.

Enclosed for Bureau, 5 copies of LHM concerning  
information furnished in referenced Oklahoma City airtel;  
one copy LHM forwarded to Dallas.

The confidential source mentioned is

desired his identity be protected in this matter

ENCLOSURE  
ENCLOSURE

- 3 - Bureau (Enc. - 5)
  - 1 - Dallas (Enc. - 1) (44-1639)
  - 1 - Oklahoma City
- DHS:bnm  
(5)

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170 AUG 7 1964

25 AUG 8 1964

DATE 6-18-80  
CLASSIFIED  
SP-12/1/64

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Sent \_\_\_\_\_ M Per \_\_\_\_\_

Special Agent in Charge

64 AUG 4 1964

ORIGINAL FILED IN



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

August 1, 1964

Title: JACK L. RUBY, Aka;  
LEE HARVEY OSWALD, Aka - VICTIM

Character: CIVIL RIGHTS

Reference: Letterhead memorandum dated  
August 1, 1964, at Oklahoma City,  
Oklahoma

The confidential source mentioned in referenced  
communication has furnished reliable information in the  
past.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 6-18-80 BY SP2TGP/53

105-47865  
ENCLOSURE



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
August 1, 1964

Re: JACK L. RUBY, Aka;  
LEE HARVEY OSWALD, Aka - VICTIM  
CIVIL RIGHTS

A confidential source has advised that Shields Mitchell is presently a free-lance cameraman and producer of motion pictures in the Dallas, Texas, area. Mitchell has related to various persons a story to the effect that he had been employed by Melvin Belli, former legal counsel for Jack Ruby. His job was to record on film pre-trial interviews between Belli and Ruby, and Belli indicated he had received as fee for defending Ruby the complete rights to any book or film based on Ruby's life.

Mitchell indicated that during the filming of these pre-trial interviews, Belli always gave as an explanation for the use of the camera to take pictures of Ruby, that he was studying the personality and character of Ruby, and was using the films to assist him in preparing Ruby's defense. According to Mitchell, Belli was actually compiling an immense film library on Ruby for future exploitation, and apparently hoped that Ruby would suffer an emotional breakdown during one of the interviews so that it could be recorded on film. Belli's belief was that such film would become priceless as an historical document in the future and that he, Belli, would personally reap a large reward.

Mitchell indicated he had received a Master's Degree in Psychology and recognized that Belli's interviews with Ruby followed a pattern using complicated psychological techniques, and Mitchell believed use of these techniques by Belli in questioning Ruby was designed to bring about Ruby's mental breakdown, to not only aid in obtaining Ruby's release, but to enhance the value of Belli's films.



1 Jack L. Ruby

2 Mitchell indicated that Belli frequently referred  
3 to the unethical approach he was using, stating that if it  
4 became known he would "go to jail." These references by Belli  
5 alarmed Mitchell to the point that he disassociated himself  
6 from Belli's employment, but he was sworn to secrecy by Belli  
7 before leaving. Mitchell indicated another cameraman was also  
8 employed by Belli, and as far as Mitchell knew, the other  
9 cameraman had remained in Belli's employ.

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11 The confidential source furnishing the above  
12 information indicated that he had no way of evaluating the  
13 truthfulness of Mitchell's story, nor even if Mitchell had been  
14 employed by Belli as a cameraman.  
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# NAMES AND FACE

By William Rollins

## A Victory for Belli

The Texas State Supreme Court turned down the state bar association's demand that Melvin M. Belli be disbarred in Texas for his rip-roaring handling of the Jack Ruby trial. Belli, who insisted long and loudly that his client couldn't get a fair trial in Dallas, issued a snort from his San Francisco office: "Like (Gen. of the Army Douglas) MacArthur, I shall be back—into Texas. The same bunch that's beaten in their own Supreme Court is now moving before the rich man's insurance club, the American Bar Association, to kick me out of there. Next they'll move to have my membership in the Book-of-the-Month Club revoked."

Belmont  
Mohr  
DeLoach  
Casper  
Callahan  
Conrad  
Evans  
Gale  
Rosen  
Sullivan  
Tavel  
Trotter  
Tele. Rm.  
Holmes  
Gandy

The Washington Post and Times Herald  
The Washington Daily News  
The Evening Star  
New York Herald Tribune  
New York Journal-American  
New York Mirror  
New York Daily News  
New York Post  
The New York Times  
The Worker  
The New Leader  
The Wall Street Journal  
The National Observer  
People's World  
Date

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 6-19-80 BY SP2TAP/SM

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FBI

Date: 10/20/64

Mr. Tolson  
Mr. DeLoach  
Mr. Casper  
Mr. Callahan  
Mr. Conrad  
Mr. Evans  
Mr. Gale  
Mr. Rosen  
Mr. Sullivan  
Mr. Tavel  
Mr. Trotter  
Tele. Room  
Miss Holmes  
Miss Gandy

Transmit the following in \_\_\_\_\_

(Type in plain text or code)

AIRTEL

AIRMAIL

(Priority)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI ( [REDACTED] )

FROM: SAC, SAN FRANCISCO ( [REDACTED] )

SUBJECT: [REDACTED]

SM - C

OO: NEW YORK

Re Bureau airtel, 10/16/64.

Enclosed herewith are nine copies of a LHM suitable for dissemination concerning the debate between MELVIN BELLI and MARK LANE on 10/9/64 at San Francisco. This meeting was attended by SA JAMES G. CARLISLE of the San Francisco Office and [REDACTED] Mrs. HELEN JANET MEYER, Walnut Creek, California.

A copy has been sent to New York because [REDACTED] and a copy has been sent to Dallas because of their interest in this matter. Local dissemination has been made to OSI, DIO, G-2, State Department (Office of Security) and INS because of their interest in this matter.

This debate was not given press coverage by the San Francisco newspapers.

ENCLOSURE

- 3 - Bureau (REG)(Encls. 12)
- 1 - New York (INFO)(Encl. 2)(REG)
- 1 - Dallas (INFO)(Encl. 2)(REG)
- 1 - San Francisco

JGC:rap  
(6)

E. C. Wick

Approved: [Signature] Special Agent in Charge

Sent 6-18-80 M SPITAP 76

SF 100-52919  
JGC/slc

1  
2 However, the People's World newspaper, a west  
3 coast communist newspaper published weekly on Saturday,  
4 on October 17, 1964, published an article on page two  
5 captioned "Debate on Warren Report Blackout".

6  
7 In paragraph three of this article a question  
8 was raised as to why the newspapers in the San Francisco  
9 Bay Area had no reporters at this debate.

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11 Enclosed for the Bureau are three xeroxed copies  
12 of this article. One copy is enclosed for each New York  
13 and Dallas, because of their interest in this matter.  
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

San Francisco, California

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

October 20, 1964

DEBATE ON OCTOBER 9, 1964, BETWEEN MELVIN BELLI  
AND MARK LANE ON THE QUESTION "IS OSWALD THE  
LONE ASSASSIN OF THE PRESIDENT?"

On October 9, 1964, a debate between San Francisco attorney MELVIN BELLI and New York attorney MARK LANE captioned "Is Oswald the Lone Assassin of the President?" was held at the Masonic Memorial Auditorium, California Street, San Francisco. Prominent San Francisco attorney JAKE EHRLICH was the moderator. This meeting was attended by a Special Agent of the FBI and Mrs. HELEN JANET MEYER, 125 Arbolado Drive, Walnut Creek, California.

An opening statement was made by BELLI. He began his statement by praising the Warren Commission Report, stating that it was a tribute to such a great democracy as the United States and he believed that no other country could have produced such a complete report. He derided LANE for speaking in foreign countries and harming the image of the United States by implying that there had been a conspiracy in this country to kill President KENNEDY and implying that OSWALD was not the only person involved in the assassination. BELLI then asked if this is so, who are these conspirators and where are they now? BELLI stated there was no one else besides OSWALD and he said he would show this beyond a reasonable doubt. He said OSWALD was a psychotic person and always had been, and even as a youth under the New York Youth Authority, OSWALD had exhibited psychotic and schizophrenic tendencies.

BELLI then discussed the events the day KENNEDY was killed. He discussed OSWALD's travel to get the "curtain rods"; the events at the time of the shooting; how OSWALD left the building; took a bus; the finding of the bus transfer on OSWALD; his travel by cab; the shooting of TIPPIE, and OSWALD's subsequent arrest. He discussed the palmprint found on the gun; the rifle purchased by OSWALD under an assumed name; the fingerprints on the bag in which OSWALD

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This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

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DEBATE ON OCTOBER 9, 1964, BETWEEN  
MELVIN BELLI AND MARK LANE

carried the gun; the fibers of OSWALD's jacket on the gun; the witness who saw OSWALD at the window of the book depository building; the witnesses who saw the shooting of TIPPIT; HOWARD BRENNAN's identifying OSWALD from the police line-up; the cartridges which were found to have come from OSWALD's hand gun, and the hole on the inside of the windshield of the President's car.

BELLI insisted that all these things showed beyond a reasonable doubt that OSWALD was guilty.

MARK LANE then made an opening statement. He said he had never said anywhere that there had been a conspiracy in this country to kill the President. He said that in this country there still exists the presumption of innocence until proven guilty. He commented on the voluminous, heavy Warren Report and stated that historians may some day record the most precise description of the Report and that would be President JOHNSON's remark, "It is very heavy," when he received his copy from Chief Justice WARREN.

LANE stated that OSWALD was never represented by counsel before the Warren Commission. He then discussed what he believed to be discrepancies in the Report. He talked about the Dallas Police officers at first reporting the finding of a Mauser rifle which later turned out to be an Italian gun. He discussed witness HOWARD BRENNAN, who had been standing outside the book depository building and his description of OSWALD as being entirely too accurate from that distance. He stated that BRENNAN had said OSWALD was shooting while standing by the window, but the Warren Report said OSWALD was sitting down. If OSWALD was sitting down, how could BRENNAN tell how tall he was?

He discussed the Dallas Police line-up where BRENNAN identified OSWALD as the man most closely resembling the person he had seen. LANE stated there were five teenagers in the line-up handcuffed together and also OSWALD, who kept saying, "This is not a fair line-up." He stated that there were no notes made by the FBI, the Dallas Police, or Secret Service, nor was there any tape or steno record for

DEBATE ON OCTOBER 9, 1964, BETWEEN  
MELVIN BELLI AND MARK LANE

the twelve hours that OSWALD was interrogated, and he said if you believe that you might as well believe the rest of the Warren Commission Report. What OSWALD is supposed to have said during the interrogation is reported from police memory only.

He talked about the photographs of OSWALD holding the gun which he said had been doctored or superimposed and which had been printed in various magazines. He stated that no rifle expert in the world, using the gun OSWALD had, could hit a moving target at that distance with the accuracy that OSWALD had exhibited. He stated that three leading rifle experts, using the Italian gun, fired eighteen shots at a still--not a moving--target and missed five times. He said that authorities have stated that OSWALD ordered the rifle from a Chicago sporting firm from an article in the February, 1963, "Rifleman" magazine. He said that is a lie because the length and weight of the gun advertised in that article are different than the length and weight of the gun actually found.

He discussed the witnesses' testimony who saw OSWALD bring the gun into the building. One witness did not see any package. The other two said the package was carried under OSWALD's armpit cupped in his right hand, and that is impossible because the gun broken down was too long for that.

He discussed eleven witnesses who saw Officer TIPPIT shot. He said the Warren Commission never called many of these witnesses; one gave a completely different description, and one woman was told by the Dallas Police not to testify. He said the Warren Commission relied on the FBI, Dallas Police, and Secret Service, and never got all the facts.

BELLI in his rebuttal stated that the Dallas Police, the FBI, and Secret Service had carried out their duty and had done everything possible to protect the President. He said the Commission had been composed of elite Congressional members and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and insisted that the facts had been ferreted out and that the Warren Commission Report was complete.

DEBATE ON OCTOBER 9, 1964, BETWEEN  
MELVIN BELLI AND MARK LANE

He then discussed nailing down the various rumors and discussed some of these, such as the erroneous name GLICK for the taxi driver, OSWALD's description, and possible shots coming from the overpass.

LANE in his rebuttal stated he did not believe that elite Congressmen were on the Commission. He said he felt that honor would return to the United States when American people look at the facts in the case. He said he is not concerned about the image of the United States, but is concerned with the substance of the case. He then said that the four reporters who heard the sound of shots coming from the area of the overpass were never called by the Warren Commission. He stated that the Warren Commission believed only what it wanted to believe.

After this, there was a short question and answer period.

Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
 Belmont ☒ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mohr \_\_\_\_\_  
 DeLoach ☒ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Casper \_\_\_\_\_  
 Callahan \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Tavel \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Tele. Rm. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Holmes \_\_\_\_\_  
 Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

UPI-157

(LIBEL SUIT)

SAN FRANCISCO--SAN FRANCISCO ATTORNEY MELVIN M. BELLI TODAY FILED A \$2 MILLION LIBEL SUIT AGAINST THE CURTIS PUBLISHING CO., CHARGING THAT HE WAS EXPOSED TO "PUBLIC DISGRACE" BY TWO ARTICLES IN THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

THE ARTICLES, IN THE FEB. 8 AND JULY 25 ISSUES THIS YEAR, WERE ABOUT THE JACK RUBY MURDER TRIAL IN DALLAS, IN WHICH BELLI WAS THE CHIEF DEFENSE COUNSEL.

11/18--N549PES

105-49865-1  
NOT RECORDED

126 NOV 21 1964

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 6-19-80 BY SP2TAP/iam

WASHINGTON CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Belli Picks New Target, FBI's Hoover

BY BILL PORTERFIELD

Chronicle Reporter

Melvin Belli, the rapier-tongued defender of Jack Ruby and caustic critic of Dallas, turned Tuesday to a new target—FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover.

"Hoover has long since outlived his usefulness," Belli told newsmen after taking part in a panel discussion sponsored by the Texas Bill of Rights Foundation.

"The portfolio and dossier Hoover has on so many Americans is frightening," he said, "and one sees with dread the building up of a federal police force. It is a dangerous trend."

## Do Something

"If the FBI is so efficient," Belli asked, "why doesn't Hoover do something about all the crime and the criminals he warns us about? He names names and gangs, but doesn't do anything about them. Is there an overlord of crime that has its finger on our politicians?"

In a marathon day of pronouncements to the press, the flamboyant attorney from California made these observations:

- That if Jack Ruby doesn't kill himself first, Texas courts will reverse his death conviction for the slaying of Lee Harvey Oswald, assassin of President Kennedy.

- That his criticism of Dallas is aimed only at the oligarchy — "the 100 bankers and insurance executives, etc., of the Citizens Council who run Dallas."

"We all love Big D, but it's sunk unless its leaders have a change of heart," he said.

• That he loves Texas — only Texans, even though Texas laws are "antiquities."

## Newspaper Trial

At the Bill of Rights Foundation panel discussion in the Rice Hotel, Belli told other lawyers:

"It's wrong to try a case in the newspapers, and I'll admit my errancy—but you fight fire with fire. The district attorney says something in the press and you fire back."

Belli, who arrived here Monday night from Austin, spoke Tuesday night at a Rice University Student Forum meeting before flying back to San Francisco.

Mr. Tolson ☒  
Mr. Belmont ☒  
Mr. Mohr ☒  
Mr. DeLoach ☒  
Mr. Casper ☒  
Mr. Callahan ☒  
Mr. Conrad ☒  
Mr. Evans ☒  
Mr. Gale ☒  
Mr. Rosen ☒  
Mr. Sullivan ☒  
Mr. Tavel ☒  
Mr. Trotter ☒  
Tele. Room ☒  
Mr. Holloman ☒  
Miss Gandy ☒

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state)

3 "THE HOUSTON  
CHRONICLE"  
HOUSTON, TEXAS

Date: 12/9/64

Edition:

Author: BILL PORTERFIELD

Editor: W.P. STEVEN

Title:

Character:

or

Classification:

Submitting Office: HOUSTON

☐ Being Investigated

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 6-12-80 BY SP2TDP/15pm

1105-87

NOT RECORDED

123 DEC 1964



(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

## Belli May Join Indians In Legal Battles

Melvin Belli, America's most  
controversial attorney, may join  
Puyallup Indian forces in



**MELVIN BELLI**  
legal battles with the state,  
News Tribune learned Thurs-  
day. Sederick Cone, an associate of  
Belli's, told The News Tribune  
the stormy lawyer who de-  
fended Jack Ruby is definitely in-  
volved in the Puyallup Indian  
case. One made the statement after  
a long Wednesday night with  
Belli, styled chief of the Puyallup  
tribe, Bob Satiacum, and Sati-  
acum's Seattle attorney and pub-  
lications man in Portland  
Cone is trying a case.  
Belli, long-known as one of  
America's outstanding court law-  
yers, blazed across the nation's  
pages when he defended  
Jack Ruby for the murder of Lee  
Harvey Oswald, assassin of Presi-  
dent Kennedy.

**Fired By Ruby**  
Ruby fired Belli following his  
conviction and Belli was verbally  
lashed by the president of the  
American Bar Association for his  
conduct during and after the  
trial. Later Belli sued American  
Bar Association President Walter  
E. Craig for \$5 million, claiming  
he had been slandered.

Over a national television net-  
work, Belli lashed out at Judge  
Joe B. Brown, called Dallas "a  
festering sore" and labeled Dallas  
District Atty. Henry Wade a "hog  
caller."

Cone said that if Belli can ar-  
range it in his busy schedule,  
"he'd like very much to help the  
Indians." He said it was very  
doubtful that he could assist in  
the Feb. 1 trial in which the state  
will attempt to win jurisdiction  
over net fishing on the Puyallup  
River.

**\$62 Million Complaint**  
However, he said Belli might  
be able to represent Satiacum in  
his \$62 million cross-complaint  
against the state for alleged past,  
present and future lost income  
because of state interference with  
his net fishing. Cone also said  
Belli might assist Satiacum's  
wife, Suzanne, in her April 28 ap-  
peal of a justice court conviction  
for assault arising out of the cel-  
ebrated September tepee raising  
on the County-City Building  
lawn.

No date has been set on the  
pre-trial hearing over Satiacum's  
\$62 million cross-complaint.  
Cone said any assistance to Sa-  
tiacum or the Puyallups by Belli  
would be "a labor of love." He  
said he knew Satiacum was in  
no position to pay Belli the reg-  
ular fees.

Belli's firm presently is repre-  
senting the Pitt River Indians  
of California in an appeal of a  
land settlement which granted  
about \$9 million to the Pitt River  
tribe.

**Hinges on Schedule**  
Cone said everything hinged on  
Belli's schedule, but declared the  
noted attorney "definitely is in-  
terested."

At the same time Satiacum said

another protest march on Olym-  
pia will be staged Feb. 1, possibly  
involving 1,000 Indians from  
throughout the Northwest.

He said the Indians will gather  
at the County-City Building just  
before the Puyallup fishing trial  
starts, then caravan to Olympia  
while the trial is in progress.

"We want to find out where  
red man fits in Gov. Dan Evans'  
Blueprint for Progress," Satiacum  
said.

**U.N. Membership**  
In another attempt to draw  
attention to the Indian cause, Sa-  
tiacum requested information  
Wednesday from United Nations  
Secretary U Thant about possi-  
ble Puyallup tribal membership  
in the U.N.

He claimed that the Puyallups  
as a separate nation are inter-  
ested in a national identity be-  
cause the United States "has ig-  
nored the perpetuity of our in-  
herited rights under treaties  
which were binding for all time."

Closer to home, Satiacum said  
he has called a meeting of some  
Puyallup Indians Jan. 30 to dis-  
cuss the possibility of requiring  
sports fishermen to get a permit  
from the Puyallups before fishing  
for steelhead on the lower Puy-  
allup River.

Any recommendations would  
have to be presented to the Puy-  
allup Tribal Council and its chair-  
man Frank Wright. Neither the  
tribe nor Wright have indicated  
they desire any such action.

(Indicate page, name of  
newspaper, city and state)

1 TACOMA NEWS  
TRIBUNE, Tacoma,  
Washington

Date: 1/21/65  
Edition:  
Author:  
Editor:  
Title: MELVIN BELLI

Character:  
or  
Classification: 70-3  
Submitting Office: SEA TLE  
☐ Being Investigated

105-49865  
NOT RECORDED  
176 FEB 3 1965

ALL INFORMATION  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 6-12-80 BY SP27A

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
Belmont \_\_\_\_\_  
Mohr \_\_\_\_\_  
DeLoach \_\_\_\_\_  
Casper \_\_\_\_\_  
Callahan \_\_\_\_\_  
Conrad \_\_\_\_\_  
Felt \_\_\_\_\_  
Gale \_\_\_\_\_  
Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
Sullivan \_\_\_\_\_  
Tavel \_\_\_\_\_  
Trotter \_\_\_\_\_  
Tele. Rm. \_\_\_\_\_  
Holloman \_\_\_\_\_  
Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

TO : Mr. DeLoach

DATE: 5-11-65

FROM : M. A. Jones

SUBJECT: PLAYBOY MAGAZINE  
MAY, 1965, ISSUE

A review of the May, 1965, issue of "Playboy" magazine (attached) reflects no mention of the Director but has one minor reference in the book review section concerning a new book entitled "The Man Who Wrote Dirty Books" by one Hal Dresner.

According to this book review, a minor character in the plot is a "disillusioned FBI agent named Arnold Mordecai Eisentraub, who was studying to be a rabbi until he took an aptitude test that showed 'I was low in Religion and Social Work and high in Sports and Law Enforcement. So my mother made me join the FBI.'" The review indicates the entire book is of a similar frivolous nature.

A list of items scheduled to appear in the June issue of "Playboy" includes "A Candid Conversation With Melvin Belli." He will reportedly attack "Dallas justice, the FBI and legal harrassment -- in an exclusive "Playboy" interview."

Belli, of course, is well known as the unscrupulous publicity seeker who briefly served as a defense attorney for Jack L. Ruby and has been aptly described by the Director as a "shyster." Belli from time to time has been critical of the Bureau.

Bufile 105-49865-A reflects that in December, 1964, while in Austin, Texas, Belli personally attacked the Director and the Bureau, suggesting that a Federal police force was being built. It was another typical example of the thirst for headlines so often evidenced by this egomaniac.

## RECOMMENDATION:

For information.

Enclosure - Detached & forwarded to

- 1 - Mr. DeLoach
- 1 - Mr. Rosen

JRE:rs (5)

16 MAY 13 1965

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED DATE 6-18-80 BY SP-1 P/L

NOT RECORDED  
199 MAY 18 1965

60 MAY 13 1965

ORIGINAL FILED IN

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

AREA CODE

May 12, 1965

Hon. J. Edgar Hoover  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Hoover:

[REDACTED] our office had the opportunity on many occasions of working with special agents from your department. The courteous, kind, and competent assistance rendered was always gratefully appreciated.

It is disturbing to read as I did recently that a member of the bar of the State of California, one Melvin Belli, Esq., made what I consider the absurd statements concerning you and the Bureau. It is even more deplorable that the public news media deemed these remarks worthy of circulation. Remarks such as those made by Mr. Belli merit neither response, nor consideration. I felt that I should make my feelings known to you.

[REDACTED] and I send you our very best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 6-18-80 BY SP2TAP/ESM

REC-18

EX-103

MAY 17 1965

Mr. Belmont  
Mr. Mohr  
Mr. DeLoach  
Mr. Casper  
Mr. Callahan  
Mr. Conrad  
Mr. Felt  
Mr. Gale  
Mr. Rosen  
Mr. Sullivan  
Mr. Tavel  
Mr. Trotter  
Tele. Room  
Miss Holmes  
Miss Gandy

39 MAY 17 1965

EX-103

CONFIDENTIAL

May 24, 1965

EXTENDED REC-18  
105-49865-21

Boston, Massachusetts

Dear

Your letter of May 12th has been received, and I am indeed encouraged to know of your support. I certainly appreciate the generous comments concerning personnel of this Bureau, and my associates join me in thanking you for your kind remarks. We hope that our future endeavors continue to merit such approbation.

It was very kind of and you to send best wishes.

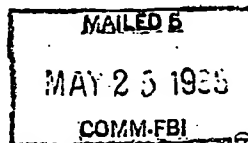
Sincerely yours,  
J. Edgar Hoover

1 - Boston - Enclosure

NOTE: We last corresponded with cordially on 7-6-62. At that time he was

There is no derogatory information in Bufiles concerning him. is on the Special Correspondents' List. The remarks th refers to as being made by Melvin Belli, who is well known to the Bureau, appeared in an extensive interview published in the June, 1965, issue of the magazine "Playboy." The interview is the subject of a Jones to DeLoach memorandum dated 5-18-65 captioned "Melvin Belli, Interview, "Playboy" magazine, June, 1965."

KLS:cal (4)



ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 6-18-80 BY SP2-Rg1

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

TO : Mr. DeLoach

DATE: 5-18-65

FROM : M. A. Jones

SUBJECT: MELVIN BELLI  
INTERVIEW, "PLAYBOY" MAGAZINE  
JUNE, 1965

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 6-13-80 BY SP2T/M/1987

Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
DeLoach \_\_\_\_\_  
Mohr \_\_\_\_\_  
Ladd \_\_\_\_\_  
Clegg \_\_\_\_\_  
Glavin \_\_\_\_\_  
Nichols \_\_\_\_\_  
Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
Sullivan \_\_\_\_\_  
Tavel \_\_\_\_\_  
Trotter \_\_\_\_\_  
Tele. Room \_\_\_\_\_  
Holloman \_\_\_\_\_  
Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

Melvin Belli, San Francisco attorney and the most notorious character in the legal profession, has blasted, in the current issue of "Playboy," the Director, Bobby Kennedy, the American Bar Association and the American Medical Association, with the Director receiving top billing. The article is attached.

In the interview, conducted by an unidentified "Playboy" interviewer, Belli commented he did not believe that the FBI suppressed any knowledge it had of any plot to assassinate the President although he could not understand why the Bureau did not give Secret Service the file it had on Oswald. The Director is mentioned unfavorably in passing at several points, however, Belli's first real criticism occurs when he asks what he thinks of the FBI's reputation for scientific crime detection. He replied that the Bureau's technical expertise is more impressive than its reputation. He says it spends its time and the taxpayers' money chasing "two-bit car thieves and looking for communist spies" while organized crime continues to prosper. He claims there is no reason why the FBI could not have broken up the syndicate long ago "if Hoover really wanted to." He said "syndicate bigwigs" are so good at covering up their tracks it is difficult to get convictions and the Director wants to keep the FBI's reputation "unbesmirched by failure." He suggests that the interviewer read Fred Cook's book "The FBI Nobody Knows" to get the cold, hard facts about the FBI. He claims that the Director has done a great job in making his position more secure but that his "dictatorial ideas and ideology have no place in a position of such power in a democracy." Belli describes Mr. Hoover's ideology as fascism and he wonders why so many ex-FBI men are members of the John Birch Society. He said that the Director is an "archreactionary autocrat," who believes that the people are not fit to govern themselves. He describes Mr. Hoover as a "dangerous, dangerous man whom we should have gotten rid of a long time ago," and given full rein, in the name of law and order, he would have completely abandoned the constitutional, due process protections guaranteed to every citizen. When asked if he was not going too far, Belli responded "I probably am--because I'm telling the truth." Then he says he fully expects a call from one of Mr. Hoover's "gray-flannel minions" because the Bureau has already tried to tap his phones and interfere with his mail. He said if visited he is ready, but the question is "are they ready for me?"

REC- 24 105-4585-25

Enclosure

1 - Mr. DeLoach

1 - Mr. Rosen

1 - Mr. Gale

1 - Mr. Sullivan

JWO:B:cm (6)

XEROX  
JUN 14 1965

(Continued on next page)

ENCLOSURE

CRIME



M. A. Jones to DeLoach Memo  
RE: MELVIN BELLI

Significant of his devious nature, when asked about wiretapping, Belli said that it is morally, legally and innately wrong. He then admits that his own office uses wiretapping because the practice is so widespread that he needs it to adequately represent his clients.

He attacks the American Bar Association because of its suggestion that members of the profession engage in the defense of unpopular defendants on the one hand, but as a matter of practice refuses to sanction attorneys who defend persons accused of heinous crimes. He attacks the American Medical Association at great length for the failure of doctors to testify against colleagues in malpractice suits because their insurance would be subject to cancellation. Belli complains that his practice leaves him little time to work on his autobiography which he says is really going to lay into all those b-----" (a word reflecting on legitimate birth). When asked who he means he said "You know: Bobby Kennedy, J. Edgar, the A.M.A., the A.B.A., the insurance companies, ad infinitum."

#### BUFILES:

In 1964 Belli received an extortion note postmarked at Starkville Mississippi, 3-24-64. He forwarded the letter to the Jackson Resident Agency by mail for "information and consideration." The case was closed after investigation when the United States Attorney at Oxford, Mississippi, declined prosecution. In July, 1964, the Bureau learned that Belli had his interviews with Jack Ruby filmed, allegedly for preparation of his defense. A cameraman he engaged said Belli had obtained all rights to any book or film on Ruby before accepting his defense and allegedly compiled an immense film library on Ruby for future exploitation. Belli allegedly deliberately attempted to have Ruby break down mentally before the camera to enhance the value of his films. Typical references to Belli in Bufiles reflect in 1941 he sent greetings to the Soviet Union in support of the Red Army's struggle against Nazi Germany; in 1949 he protested the prosecution of the twelve communist leaders to Alben Barkley;

In 1959 after Belli introduced west coast mobster Mickey Cohen at a seminar on legal tactics during the American Bar Association convention as "Professor O'Brien," an expert on tax evasion, the Director instructed that San Francisco should be alert for any violations of law by Belli as his record was questionable.

#### OBSERVATIONS:

This "two-bit" Barnum and Bailey barrister grossly distorts the role of the FBI in law enforcement and continues, through his excesses, to display the baseness of his character. His reasoning on every count is typical of his nature as a megalomaniac. To do anything but ignore him would play into his hands and provide him with some of the publicity he seeks. This is another case of where the Director and the Bureau can well be proud of their enemies.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

For information.